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Winter 1984

Food News for Consumers

United States Department of Agriculture Food Safety and Inspection Service

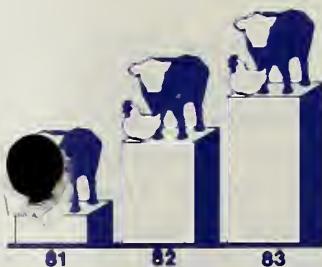
USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service:

- Inspects and analyzes domestic and imported meat, poultry, and meat and poultry food products;
- Establishes standards and approves recipes and labels for processed meat and poultry products; and
- Monitors the meat and poultry industries for violations of inspection laws.

Efficiency of Federal Meat and Poultry Inspection Increasing

In response to the increasing volume of meat and poultry products inspected by FSIS, the agency is continuing its efforts to improve inspection efficiency. New inspection methods--some already in place and others being developed--meet the needs of a modernized industry, while continuing to provide a high level of consumer protection.

According to the agency's 1983 annual report to Congress, FSIS continues to inspect a larger volume of products with fewer inspectors, without sacrificing effectiveness. In 1983, 8,000 inspectors in 7,450 meat and poultry plants inspected approximately 121 million head of livestock, 4.5 billion birds and 112 billion pounds of processed meat and poultry products.



In addition, in 1983 over 2.1 billion pounds of fresh and processed meat were exported to the United States. Of this amount, 16.6 million pounds were refused entry because they were found unacceptable during inspection. FSIS also conducted over 2,130 reviews of foreign plants approved to export to the United States.

Also during the year, FSIS scientists analyzed more than 212,250 meat and poultry samples, and agency officials reviewed 115,450 product labeling applications, 3,150 blueprints of plants and 2,350 drawings of plant equipment.

For a copy of the agency's 1983 annual report, which details information and statistics on the federal meat and poultry inspection program, request: "Meat and Poultry Inspection, 1983, Report of the Secretary of Agriculture to the U.S. Congress."

USDA to Tighten Control of Meat and Poultry Plants Seen as Chronic Violators

Last December, USDA announced plans to tighten government control over a small percentage of meat and poultry packing and processing plants that chronically fail to meet sanitation standards and other regulatory requirements. USDA's new initiatives include:

- tightening eligibility requirements for plants that want to sell meat and poultry products to the federal government;
- regulating more intensively plants with a poor history of compliance or which are marginal in their operating practices, with increased emphasis on swift and decisive action to deal with problems;
- submitting a legislative package to Congress that would expand the secretary of agriculture's authority to shut down plants by withdrawing inspection; and
- finding ways to prosecute violators in a faster and more effective manner.

While the overwhelming majority of those in the meat and poultry industry are responsible, according to USDA officials, there is a small percentage that consistently operate at the edge of acceptable bounds. They are the ones who undermine public confidence in the meat and poultry supply, tarnish the image of the industry and call into question the effectiveness of the inspection program.

USDA is also tightening requirements for eligibility to bid on federal meat and poultry contracts to assure all bidders are able and willing to produce a satisfactory product. Plants with marginal inspection ratings will not be eligible to bid.

In November USDA announced that the National Research Council will undertake an 18-month study of the effectiveness of existing and proposed inspection procedures used to inspect meat and poultry for safety, wholesomeness and labeling accuracy. The National Research Council is the operating arm of the National Academy of Sciences and the National Academy of Engineering.

For more information, see press release #1336-83, "USDA to Tighten Control of Meat and Poultry Inspection," and the background paper, "Maintaining Public Confidence in the Nation's Meat and Poultry Supply."

USDA Continues to Investigate School Lunch Ground Beef

USDA on Dec. 2 issued a complaint seeking to withdraw inspection services from Cattle King Co., Denver, Colo., Stanko Packing Co., Gering, Neb., and Nebraska Beef Packers, Gordon, Neb.--all owned by members of the same family. The complaint was issued because of evidence that Cattle King had illegally processed and distributed adulterated meat products by butchering cattle that had died other than by slaughter. USDA's authority for the complaint is based on 1982 actions placing the Gering and Gordon plants on probation because of earlier convictions.

On Sept. 20, 1983, USDA ordered an immediate halt to all distribution of ground beef processed by Cattle King and Stanko Packing for use in the National School Lunch Program. The action followed allegations about operating practices at Cattle King, including charges that Cattle King management was diverting unwholesome meat into the food supply and operating the facility under substandard conditions. USDA's Inspector General and the U.S. Department of Justice launched an immediate investigation.

On Sept. 21, USDA suspended Cattle King and the Gering plant from bidding in the Federal procurement program. The firms challenged the action. On Jan. 5, 1984, however, a USDA debarring officer continued the suspension, pending results of the investigation. About 18 million pounds of the ground beef are being held by USDA. USDA is supplying beef to the school lunch program to replace the impounded meat.

Immediately after the charges, FSIS began an extensive sampling program to determine if the ground beef was unsafe or unwholesome. Approximately 450 samples of the product were tested for chemical residues, foreign material and spoilage. Laboratory analyses revealed that a dozen samples contained from 1 to 18 insect fragments. Though not a health hazard, FSIS felt this indicated a potential sanitation problem. Also discovered were eight small metal staples in seven samples taken at the plants, but it is not known if the staples came from the plants or were introduced later.

For more information, contact: John McClung, Director, Information and Legislative Affairs, Food Safety and Inspection Service, Rm. 327-E Adm. Bldg., U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250, Telephone: (202) 447-7943.

Pamphlet Solves Label Mysteries

Do packages with net weights, recommended daily allowances and l-o-n-g lists of ingredients throw you, making you yearn for a diet of roots and berries?

A Good Housekeeping poll conducted in March 1983 reveals that most shoppers have trouble with labels. As a result, they normally don't read them in much detail, and so miss out on a lot of important information.

But help is here for decoding meat and poultry product labels. FSIS now has a short, well-illustrated pamphlet called "The Label Wraps It Up." It explains how these labels provide information consumers need.

What do meat and poultry labels tell us? First, there are the six things these labels are legally required to show: the product name, ingredients, weight, USDA inspection mark, plant number showing where the food was processed, and the name and address of the producer. The pamphlet shows where to look for each of these items on a label, and how to interpret them.

Many manufacturers tell you even more. They might include special handling instructions, nutrition information and cooking tips. The pamphlet explains how to use this information to take the best home-care of meat and poultry products.

Free while supplies last, request "The Label Wraps It Up."

Slow Cookers for Springtime Eating

Though you often think of slow cookers for cold-weather meals, they can be great year-round. Busy people are discovering the convenience of crockpots in planning and cooking ahead.

Year-round slow cooker recipes are limitless. Slow cookers are great for ham and scalloped potatoes, sweet and sour pork, tender flank steak, coq au vin, braised shortribs, barbecued meatballs and other savory meat, poultry and vegetable dishes that never go out of season.

A slow cooker has many pluses: it lets you use cheaper cuts of meat (slow cookers tenderize); it lets you save energy dollars (the cooker can run all day for pennies); and it retains nutrients in foods (because of the low cooking temperatures, valuable proteins and vitamins are less likely to be lost than in stove-top cooking).

There's only one problem with slow cookers: time-lag. There is a danger period of up to two hours at the beginning of cooking before the pot reaches a heat high enough (above 140°F) to kill most common food poisoning bacteria. These include staph, salmonella and perfringens--the kind of organisms that cause mild to severe intestinal flu-like illness.

Because of the two-hour time-lag, cooks are advised to be extra careful in the storage and care of foods--especially vulnerable meat and poultry products.



Here are some bacteria-stopping hints:

--Refrigerate perishable foods as soon as you get home from the store. This keeps bacteria from getting a head start at multiplying to dangerous levels.

--Avoid using frozen meat or poultry in the slow cooker. It takes longer to cook frozen ingredients, which lengthens the time for the crockpot to heat up to a bacteria-killing temperature. Using frozen meat can also result in under-cooking, because cooking times given in crockpot cookbooks are based on thawed ingredients.

--Never overload the cooker. Any portion of meat or poultry sticking up above the cooking area may not be fully heated. This increases the chance for foodborne infection.

--Avoid using the cooker to reheat leftovers. Refrigerate leftovers as soon as your meal is over. Reheat them later at high, stove-top temperatures before re-serving.

For more details on using meat and poultry in slow cookers, see illustrated feature #1264-83, "A Very Merry Crockpot."

1984-A "Picnic" of a Poster Contest

In 1980, when FSIS began the National Food Safety Poster Contest for children, first-grader Timothy Stanek of Windham, Ohio, submitted a poster that inspired last year's contest on "Summertime Food and Fitness."

Timothy drew a picnic table, food and a large yellow sun beaming down. Across his drawing, he crayoned boldly, "Have a Safe Picnic." His teacher had obviously covered the rules about avoiding food poisoning by keeping food cool and out of the sun.

That's exactly the message being sent to the nation's grade school youngsters this year. Using the picnic theme, the poster kits explain hot-weather care of foods, especially perishable meat and poultry products.

This year's kits, which reached all public and private schools in December, also cover fitness. They explain that health depends both on eating safe food and exercising. A number of "summer fun" activities are encouraged.

As the contest grows--there were 70,000 entries last year--the prizes have also improved. This year, first-place winners, their parents and their teachers will each win \$200 U.S. Savings Bonds and a free trip to Washington, D.C., for the June awards ceremony. Schools of the first-place winners will also receive \$400 for library and audio-visual purchases.

Second-place winners and their teachers win \$100 savings bonds. Third-place winners and their teachers win \$50 bonds.

March 12, 1983, is the entry deadline. Youngsters wanting to enter must request a kit through their teachers or principals. To order a kit, write: 1984 National Food Safety Poster Contest, P.O. Box 14313, Dayton, Ohio 45414. Kits are available only while supplies last.



FSIS Gets Ready for National Consumers Week

During this year's National Consumers Week, April 23-29, FSIS will make sure consumers nationwide are aware of the agency's consumer education programs. Packets of materials that explain those education programs are being prepared for use by agency officials in regional offices. The officials will then use this information locally in speeches and radio and television interviews with consumer groups on the agency's food inspection responsibilities and its consumer services, including the annual children's food safety poster contest and the meat and poultry hotline.

Computers to Help Prevent Residues in Meat and Poultry



Acronyms come and go, their meanings known only to a small number of individuals. But one--FARAD--is likely to be around for a long time and probably will be known by almost everyone involved in helping farmers produce wholesome livestock and poultry.

FARAD stands for Food Animal Residue Avoidance Data Bank. By 1985 it will provide the most comprehensive food animal residue data bank in the world. FARAD represents the combined efforts of veterinary toxicologists, pharmacologists and computer scientists at five land grant universities and the National Agricultural Library. When completed, it will permit easy access to computerized information on food animal residues and residue avoidance practices for almost anyone involved in helping producers prevent or correct residue problems.

The researchers who created the model for FARAD's operating system and format standards are making a special effort to permit easy transfer of FARAD data to various types of computers, especially microcomputers. This should make the system accessible to a far greater number of potential users. FARAD project leaders, moreover, are consulting those future users on ways to make the data bank most useful.

The universities involved in the development of FARAD are the University of California at Davis, University of Florida, University of Idaho, University of Illinois at Urbana and North Carolina State University. The National Agricultural Library will serve as the repository for FARAD data.

For more information on FARAD, contact: Dr. Arthur L. Craigmill, Extension Toxicologist, Veterinary Extension and Environmental Toxicology, University of California, Davis, Calif. 95616, Telephone: (916) 752-1142.

Policy Revised for Food Packaging Materials

FSIS has revised its policy on materials used to wrap meat and poultry in federally inspected plants. Beginning July 17, plants will be responsible for securing guarantees from suppliers showing that each packaging material complies with federal food laws and regulations.

FSIS inspectors working in meat or poultry plants are authorized to prevent the use of any material that might lead to the adulteration of food products. The guarantees will help inspectors do their job more quickly, because they will be accessible to inspectors at each plant.

Under the new rule, FSIS will verify the guarantees. If a guarantee cannot be verified, FSIS will disapprove the material. This means it cannot be used to package meat or poultry in federally inspected plants.

The rule also clarifies the role of FSIS concerning materials. Since 1972, FSIS has evaluated packaging materials upon request from manufacturers and provided "letters of acceptance" which the suppliers can distribute to plants. The evaluations will continue but do not eliminate the need for guarantees.

For more information, see press release #59-84 "USDA Revises Policy on Packaging Materials for Meat and Poultry" (1-18-84) and a background paper "New Rule on Packaging Materials for Meat and Poultry Products."

Other FSIS News

USDA increases overtime rates for meat and poultry inspection. Press Release #1067-83 (9-30-83).

USDA clarifies policy for export inspection and certification service. Press Release #1095-83 (10-7-83).

USDA reopens comment period on pet food proposal. Comment period ended Nov. 16, 1983. Press Release #1108-83 (10-14-83).

New York meat company president sentenced for conspiracy. Press Release #1138-83 (10-24-83).

USDA hires export coordinators in three regions. Press Release #1143-83 (10-24-83).

USDA withdraws proposal to pay inspectors for preparation and cleanup time. Press Release #1167-83 (10-28-83).

USDA revises margarine standard. Press Release #1249-83 (11-22-83).

National research council to study USDA meat and poultry inspection. Press Release #1263-83 (11-25-83).

USDA to compensate for impounded meat, official says. Press Release #1274-83 (11-30-83).

USDA proposes to increase overtime rates charged to meat and poultry plants. Press Release #1298-83 (12-2-83).

How to Obtain Free Copies

Single free copies of press releases, Federal Register reprints, studies, fact sheets, and publications mentioned in the FSIS section of this newsletter are available from FSIS Public Awareness, Room 1163-S, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250. Phone: (202) 447-9351.

Who can Answer Your Questions

If you have a question or a problem with the safety or wholesomeness of a meat or poultry product, or the truthfulness of its labeling, contact FSIS Meat and Poultry Hotline, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250 or call (202) 472-4485.

Where to Send Comments

Send your comments on proposals in the FSIS section to: Regulations Coordination Division, Room 2637-S, FSIS, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250. Usually two copies are requested. Be sure to identify the proposal you are commenting on by referring to the title of informal proposals or, for formal proposals, the date of publication in the Federal Register.

USDA's Economic Research Service:

- Analyzes international activities of agricultural significance;
- Does research on commodities, food and nutrition, natural resources, and rural development; and
- Furnishes timely and objective economic and statistical information to farmers, other rural Americans, industries, consumers, and policy-makers.

Home Gardens Likely Source of More Vegetables in the Future



Nearly half of all American households now grow vegetables, a trend that seems likely to continue or even increase in the future, according to ERS economists. Using information from USDA's 1977-78 Nationwide Food Consumption Survey, they say home gardening is here to stay.

According to the economists, households most likely to garden are those consisting of elderly adults who have no small children present, own their own homes and draw income from retirement pensions. Although homeownership tends to encourage gardening, ERS found that elderly persons in general--no matter what their circumstances--are more likely to garden. This may be because gardening is viewed as a leisure or exercise activity.

On the other hand, households composed of one working adult engage in home gardening less frequently. Households with preschool age children also are less likely to garden. In both cases, time is at a premium.

Many demographic and socioeconomic trends can be expected to influence the growth of home gardening in the future. The American population is aging, people are moving to the Sun Belt and real incomes are not rising rapidly. Given these developments, the prospects point toward a continued high, if not increasing, proportion of households that will garden.

For more information, see: "The Outlook for American Gardening," National Food Review (NFR-23), Summer 1983.

Fats and Oils Sources— Visible and Invisible

Fats and oils are an essential part of the human diet, providing the most concentrated source of energy of any food. They conserve protein necessary for growth, serve as carriers of fat-soluble vitamins, improve the body's absorption of vitamins and make many foods more palatable.

Economists with ERS have looked into fats and oils consumption in the United States and have found each person consumes an average of 135 pounds of these food products each year. They also determined those fats and oils enter our menus in various ways, some more obvious than others. So, they divide the dietary sources of these items into two categories: visible and invisible.

The "visible" fats and oils, which account for 54 of the 135 pounds consumed yearly, are isolated from animal products or oilseeds and other vegetable products. Examples are tallow, lard and butter from animals, and soybean oil, cottonseed oil, corn oil, peanut oil, palm oil, olive oil and sunflower oil. These fats and oils are used in the home in such forms as shortening, margarine, butter and cooking and salad oils.

Invisible fats, which account for roughly 81 of the 135 pounds of fats and oils consumed, come from such sources as meat, poultry, fish, eggs, fruits, vegetables and dairy products other than butter.

For more information on fats and oils consumption in the American diet, see "The Fats and Oils Diet," Farmline, October-November 1983.

USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service:

- Operates a variety of marketing programs and services—several of interest to consumers—that include:
 - Developing grades and standards for the trading of food and other farm products and carrying out grading services on request from packers and processors;
 - Inspecting egg products for wholesomeness;
 - Administering marketing orders that aid in the marketing of milk, fruits, vegetables and related specialty crops like nuts; and
 - Administering truth-in-seed labeling and other regulatory programs.

Government Grades Help Consumers Shop and Eat Better

You can shop more economically for your family--and yourself--if you know the differences among government food grades. Knowing the differences can mean better eating, too, according to officials with AMS.

Take beef, for example. USDA Prime, the top USDA grade, is the ultimate in tenderness, juiciness and flavor. While Prime is best for roasting or broiling, it is likely to cost more than the second grade, USDA Choice, which has slightly less marbling. ("Marbling" means the flecks of fat within the lean that make meat tender and juicy.)

Some stores sell beef that would qualify for other U.S. grades, such as U.S. Good, under a house brand name rather than under the USDA grade mark. This beef will likely cost less than Prime or Choice, and it may meet your needs well, particularly if you use slow, moist cooking to make it tender.

In establishing grades for foods like meat, poultry, eggs, fruits, vegetables and dairy products, AMS considers the values that wholesale buyers and sellers place on the products. Generally, products with characteristics of the higher grades are more marketable and bring a better price for the producer.

Labeling of the grade on a product is not required by federal law, even if a food has been officially graded. But a number of food manufacturers and distributors choose to put the official grade on their products, as do many retailers.

USDA grades help establish quality levels of products, and this, in turn, can help consumers make choices. As a food shopper, you are most likely to see the USDA grade on beef, veal, lamb, broilers, turkeys, eggs and butter. You also may see it on some cheese, instant nonfat dry milk, preserves, frozen concentrated orange juice and canned and frozen fruits and vegetables. Some fresh produce also is grade labeled, particularly potatoes and apples.

For processed fruits and vegetables, qualities are U.S. Grades A, B and C. While only a few packers grade canned, frozen and dried products, many processing plants use USDA's grading service for quality control purposes.

Most processed fruits and vegetables are at least U.S. Grade B quality, and that is quite good. The difference between A and B? A has a better appearance and texture than B, so U.S. Grade A products might be used in special meals or dishes for which looks and texture are important. Grade C products, which cost the least, are still fairly good quality, and are just as wholesome and nutritious as the higher grades.



For fresh fruits and vegetables, the typical range of grades is U.S. Fancy, U.S. No. 1 and U.S. No. 2. The chief trading grade for most of these products is U.S. No. 1, while U.S. Fancy is a premium quality. Such grades are seen mainly on potatoes and apples, and are generally based on a product's color, shape, maturity and freedom from defects, such as cuts from harvesting equipment.

For more information about grades and food buying, write: Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. Two packets of food buying publications are available from that office:

- (1) Four fruit and vegetable brochures, plus "How to Buy Economically." Refer to order number 001-000-04309-9. Cost--\$7.
- (2) Eight meat, poultry and dairy products brochures. Refer to order number 001-000-04308-1. Cost--\$9.

USDA's Agricultural Research Service:

- Ensures high-quality food and fiber for Americans and for export—in areas of:
 - Food safety and quality;
 - Natural resources conservation;
 - Human nutrition;
 - Productivity of plant crops and of livestock; and
 - Farm product marketing.

Pawpaw Fruit Might Become More Popular Food

In the past, the pawpaw tree has generally been a little-known oddity for backyard gardens, where it is grown as an ornamental plant, thriving in shady, poor soils. Although most people today might not know about pawpaws, the fruit of this native American tree could soon become quite popular.

Pawpaws are winning a reputation as a vitamin-packed fruit among today's nutrition conscious consumers. The fruit is high in vitamins A and C and notably higher than other tree fruits in potassium, phosphorus, magnesium, sulfur and iron. It has a good balance of the amino acids essential to a good diet, with up to six times more of the amino acids found in apples, peaches and grapes. It also has unsaturated fats.

Many people, though, are ambivalent about the fruit's taste, which has been likened to a cross between mango and banana, with a very sweet custard-like texture. There are several other drawbacks, too. After ripening, for example, the fruit rapidly deteriorates. After cooking, it must be handled carefully to avoid bitterness. In addition, the pawpaw is not yet ready for large-scale production, since its yield is not as predictable as other fruits.

Fortunately, pawpaws have a genetic makeup that can be manipulated to improve the fruit's texture and flavor to suit consumer tastes. In addition, the hardy 20- to 25-foot high pawpaw tree withstands disease and insects well.

For more information, contact: R. Neal Peterson, Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250, Telephone: (202) 447-8059, or Dr. John P. Cherry, Agricultural Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Philadelphia, Pa. 19118. Phone: (215) 233-6595.

**Laser Signals
from Space
Might Someday
Detect Crop
Deficiencies
and Disease**

ARS agronomists are using laser signals from space to learn more about the nutrient content of crops. In greenhouse studies, they have found that laser light causes fluorescence--the emission of energy in the form of light--in plant leaves. If a plant is nutritionally deficient, the fluorescence may differ from that of a normal plant.

When laser light--which is energy--strikes the leaves of plants, some of it is absorbed; the rest fluoresces as a specific wavelength of light. Each healthy plant has a unique fluorescent response, emitting specific wavelengths that match specific nutrients. Differences in a plant's fluorescent "signature," then, could indicate that nutrients are missing.

Should the technique prove feasible, lasers on high-altitude aircraft or satellites could be used as orbiting sensors to survey crops growing in nutritionally deficient soils. The same phenomenon may be extended to help detect other stresses to plants like disease, insect damage or drought.

Laboratory experiments so far have focused only on corn and soybeans grown in nutrient-deficient soils. Fluorescence showed the plants lacked adequate levels of nitrogen, potassium, phosphorus and other essential elements.

For more information on agriculture-laser research, contact: Dr. James E. McMurtrey III, Field Crops Laboratory, Agricultural Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Beltsville, Md. 20705, Telephone: (301) 344-2646.

USDA's Food and Nutrition Service:

- Administers food programs, including:
 - The food stamp program;
 - The national school lunch and school breakfast programs;
 - The special supplemental food program for women, infants, and children (WIC); and
 - The food distribution, child care food, summer food service and special milk programs.

**School Lunch
Programs Are
Big Business**

School lunch is big business, according to a private industry survey. The national school lunch program, administered by FNS, is the fourth largest food service organization in the United States, right behind McDonald's, Burger King and Marriott.

According to FNS, school lunch is also good business. Schools that take advantage of the federally subsidized school lunch program receive government donated foods, as well as cash reimbursements for the meals they serve. Commodities supplied to the lunch program include white and sweet potatoes; canned corn, green beans and peas; and plums, prunes and raisins.

The school lunch program serves all students and is available in about 98 percent of all public school districts in the United States. FNS has found that school lunch participants at all income levels have higher intakes of calories and nutrients than nonparticipants. Importantly, lunch program participants show higher intakes of four nutrients--vitamins A and B-6, calcium and magnesium--that typically are deficient in the diets of school-age children.

For more information on the school lunch program, contact: Office of Public Information, Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 3101 Park Center Dr., Alexandria, Va. 22302, Telephone: (703) 756-3286.



More Surplus Food Destined for Schools, Institutions

Schools and nonprofit institutions will be able to take greater advantage of surplus foods under a new processing system developed by FNS. The new plan, called the national commodity processing system, will make more lower-priced processed foods available to eligible buyers.

FNS recently approved contracts with several commercial food processors to provide \$5.2 million worth of government-owned surplus commodities, mainly dairy products, for use in the manufacture of processed foods destined for federal nutrition assistance programs. These commodities include process and cheddar cheese, butter, nonfat dry milk and honey.

Thus far, food processors approved to participate are: Pillsbury Co., Minneapolis, Minn.; Better Baked Foods, North East, Pa.; Chi-Chi Foods Ltd., Elk Grove Village, Ill.; Roney Ice Cream Co., Aurora, Ill.; Blue Morrow Sales Inc., Amarillo, Texas; Camino Real Foods Inc., Vernon, Calif.; Tony's Pizza, Marshall, Minn.; and Sabatasso Foods, Santa Ana, Calif.

Under the agreements, the processors will convert the surplus foods into processed items such as cheese pizzas, pork patties, cheese and onion enchiladas, beef and bean burritos, milk shakes and taco rollitos. These foods will then be sold to the eligible schools and charitable institutions--at lower prices that reflect the value of the donated commodities they contain.

The new program offers some important advantages. First, schools and institutions will have available a wider variety of products. The processors will benefit by increasing their school and institutional sales. Finally, the government will be able to reduce its inventory of surplus foods.

For more information, contact: Gwena Kay Tibbits, Food Distribution Division, Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Alexandria, Va. 22302, Telephone: (703) 756-3660.

USDA's Human Nutrition Information Service:

- Maintains USDA's Nutrient Data Bank;
- Conducts the Nationwide Food Consumption Survey;
- Monitors nutrient content of the U.S. food supply;
- Provides nutrition guidelines for education and action programs;
- Collects and disseminates food and nutrition materials; and
- Conducts nutrition education research.

Nutrient Guide to Pork Products Available

Comprehensive nutrient values for pork products can be found in the 10th section of the latest edition of Agriculture Handbook No. 8. To expedite release of the information to the public, the revised edition is being issued in sections, as they become available. The section on pork, entitled "Composition of Foods: Pork Products; Raw, Processed, Prepared," serves as an authoritative reference for data on nutrients in most pork products marketed today.

Each page of the section reports nutrient information for a single pork food item. The data is given three ways: for a 100-gram edible portion, for common measures of the food item and for one pound of the product as purchased. The handbook provides values for food energy; refuse; proximate composition (water, protein, lipid, carbohydrate and ash); nine minerals; nine vitamins; individual fatty acids; total saturated, monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fatty acids; cholesterol; and 18 amino acids.

The handbook is available for \$7.50 from: Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. Refer to stock number 001-000-04368-4.

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